

Alien Masters 221

Chapter 221

The rest of the girls from Earth were sitting and Listening closely. We were all concerned. If | could have this happen, they could, too.

“No,” | told her, “the men don’t know what pregnancy entails. | don’t think they’ve ever seen a pregnant woman. They can’t comprehend what is happening. They still just think I’m getting fat.”

“What will you do when you deliver?” an Earth girl asked.

“| don’t know,” | told her. | stroked my stomach and felt the familiar roll as the child moved under my hand. “They Like to study things. | fear they will want to study the child,” | said quietly.

Master Damien and his Brothers protected me. | wasn’t sure that protection extended to a child conceived by me. | feared for the babe, especially if it was female.

| wanted to run away before the child was born, but | wasn’t sure where to go. It was unclear how | would even get away. My instinct to protect my baby got stronger every day.

| was ill suited for this place, though. There was no way | would be able to protect my child once it was born. It crushed me to realize what the men could do if they wanted to.

“| remember pregnancy from Earth,” another girl whispered placing a hand on my stomach. “You should not be feeling the motions of the child already; your belly isn’t big enough. | don’t think your pregnancy will last the same time it does on Earth.”

“You don’t think | have much time left, do you?” | asked quietly. “I have to do something quickly.”

We never said the word escape to one another. It was a dangerous word to say here. They knew | feared my owners’ reaction to a child. It was assumed | had to get away.

The worry about the child usually lasted all day. Today for some reason was different. | sat on the beach that afternoon and felt breathless with anticipation. It wasn't clear to me what | was anticipating, but it excited me greatly. This feeling was so strong it was hard to ignore.

My fake owners picked me up and | was almost giddy with the sensation. It was hard, but | fought it down. | did my best not to let my crazy emotions show to anyone. On my knees in the shower scrubbing the grime, | felt like singing.

Actually, | did sing, until one of my owners chastised me. Giggling stupidly, | held the emotion inside and just tried to focus on the mundane task at hand.

At the Keepers the next day the excitement inside of me was overwhelming. | was waiting so patiently for something. When Lunch came the emotions were in such a frenzy, | could barely eat. Even the Light haired Brother that fed me Lunch, who never noticed me, said something about my strange attitude.

Late in the afternoon the depression set in. | cried on my pad as | waited for my owners to come and get me. The feeling tore at my heart.

| could not complete myself and felt abandoned.

This made no sense. My fake owners came to pick me up as they always did. | should have felt insane and | bawled laying on the ground.

My fake owners literally had to pick me up and carry me to the toilet as it felt like my heart was being torn apart.

| refused dinner and was put in the box for my bad behavior. It didn't matter. | wanted to die, there was nothing left to live for.

The emotions that | considered the sign of my schizophrenia were so strong to happen as | wailed in the box. My mind was breaking, | couldn't even pretend to be normal.

| lay awake in the darkness and didn't sleep. Anger started to fester inside me.

Chapter 222

‘They have no right,’ screamed my internal voice. ‘I deserved my happiness and they took it from me!’

It went on for days. I barely slept. The anger and depression wrapped around me completely. My dreams were full of blank desperation. When I was awake I saw the world as a desolate place.

By the third day, I didn’t bother to hide it. I couldn’t have if I tried. My fake Masters dropped me at the Keepers and I lay down on the ground just inside the compound wall. Tears leaked out of my eyes continuously and I stared ahead not seeing anything.

Rose talked to me and Fuji begged me to get up and move around, but I couldn’t understand them. I lay defeated all day long wherever the Keepers put me. The lunch bell rang and I didn’t move. Men came and went in front of me, but my mind was gone.

The desert that had become my thoughts was quiet suddenly. I felt broken and used, but the crushing weight of sadness had Lifted.

I looked around and I was at home in the compound. There were no memories of getting here. Last I remembered I had been crying at the Keepers on the ground. It made no sense.

I sat up slowly on the bed and heard my fake owners talking to the Healers. The Healers told them I was past repair. Perhaps it had something to do with the stomach. I would not be of use to anyone anymore.

All was silent as I considered what they had said. I bolted out of bed when I realized. A slave with no use would not be kept. They would kill me and kill the child.

“Masters, may I clean the apartment?” I called to them straightening the covers on the bed and stumbling around. As the Healers watched, I tidied the apartment and tried to act normal.

The men stopped me and the Healers examined me.

"It seems better," the Healers said disbelieving. "This makes no sense."

Yes, I had to agree. Nothing made sense anymore. My mother had talked about my cousin with the mental illness. It didn't seem like the kind of thing that came and went. I had no idea what was wrong with me.

At the Keepers the next day, Jon and Fuji

"We feared for you," Rose said with tears streaking her face. "I took you home two days ago and you back. Our owners went to see yours, they saw you on the bed. You wouldn't move or eat."

"My owners said the only time they had seen was \

Jon's bend was broken," Fuji said seriously.

Chapter 223

We spent the morning inside. I shared with them the story of my cousin's mental illness. They didn't know what to say, but then neither did I.

"Perhaps," Rose said, "it is the stress of worrying about the child that broke you."

I shook my head, "I don't know. It felt like I was excited about something and then I was so sad when I couldn't make it happen. My world just fell apart. It might have been about the baby, I just don't know. I felt deserted."

My mind was mine all day, no weird intrusive feelings. I felt lonely now that they were gone, there had been something comforting about them. Part of me wanted them back, I needed those feelings for some reason.

| went to bed that night and had a dream about picking out baby cribs by myself. It was boring and annoying. There was no good crib in the store and | just wandered around aimlessly. It was a pointless dream.

Waking up, | realized | wanted to dream about the mountains or Learning to fight. | loved the dreams | had about Master Damien and his Brothers. Perhaps if | went back to sleep they would return.

Only once all night did | have a dream | wanted to continue. | heard my name being called from a distance. Several voices were calling to me and calling to one another. | recognized my real owners voices. No matter what | did, they didn't hear me, though.

The next morning | rode to the Keeper's compound in my usual silence. | Saw a shadow slide past us and it startled me. | Looked up expecting to see a great winged creature, but nothing was there, only the clouds.

"Did you see that?" one of the men asked his Brothers. The Warriors around me all had their hands on their swords. "Damned women," another one grumbled, "we need to tell the General."

The morning at the Keepers passed uneventfully. In the afternoon, | walked along the edge of the water. | went as far down as | was allowed to go before turning to head back.

Shrill alarms sounded all over the Keepers' compound. They cut through the air and | stopped in my tracks. The Last time I'd heard such an alarm the women were in the village.

Shadows passed over me and | tried to run back toward the Keepers. The women were here. One hand splayed protectively under my belly as | ran. | had to get to safety for my baby.

A dark figure dropped in front of me and | staggered back several feet. In my haste to retreat, | tripped on my own feet and Landed hard on my backside. | sprang up still intent on escaping. The creature stood staring at me and let out an ear splitting scream.

| turned in the sand and ran back the way I'd come, but my way was blocked by another female. This one had amber Liquid dripping from her fangs. Venom, | remembered, Master Kein had said they make a venom. She screamed and took off into the air.

Before I could make another move, I was grabbed from behind and we lifted into the air. I screamed and struggled against the hairy chest that held me. Sharp talons dug into my hip and shoulder, so I stopped moving.

"You would not survive the fall, human slave," the creature said thickly.

"You will not survive my talons. You live now for only one purpose."

Fighting for calm, I tried to process what she had just said. I lived for one purpose. I looked up at her fanged face and shuddered.

A long scar cut across her cheeks. It was hard to miss. I glanced at the two other winged emcirdres flying beside her and didn't see similar marks.

My real owners had told me the woman that owned them was called Nu-reeh. She was a woman which this woman was 48, and had a scar on her face. I wondered if my ownership was being transferred to her.

If I was now a slave to a woman, I was confused. I wasn't like being a slave to a creature. Judging from her threat, I'd better learn quickly, though.

It got colder and I huddled into Nu-reeh's warmth. She flew so high the air got hard to breathe. I lost consciousness several times.

"Wake up, slave!" she would screech at me when that happened and I would groggily say something.

Chapter 224

"The human cannot breathe the air above," one of her companions said flying closer to Nu-reeh. "It is more like the men." Nu-reeh grunted and kept herself at an altitude I stayed awake, but still freezing cold.

We flew into mountains that would make the Himalayas appear small. | saw deep valleys and streams tumbling down the rocky hills. It looked like places | had seen in my dreams.

She dipped into a large cave entrance and landed. It was darker and warmer inside. Since | was still shivering from the ride, | was glad for the warmth.

Torches, or at least their equivalent, lit the hallway with a white smokeless flame. In between the torches | could barely see. Nu-reeh seemed to have no difficulty navigating the route, though.

Nu-reeh carried me deeper and deeper through the caves. At some point we started to pass openings that led out of the mountain and sunlight would momentarily spill in. Outside | could see swarms of winged women flying about.

She came to a large leather flap drawn across a massive archway. She made a loud sound and it was opened by the men standing beside it. She boldly passed through never glancing at the men. | stayed huddled to her chest as she walked us briskly into a smaller area.

The hallway behind the flap reminded me of the motel. The torches were numerous here and the area was brightly lit. Doorways with leather flaps across them lined the hall. Men were all over here, but they scurried out of Nu-reeh's way. | was an oddity and they stared at me, though.

We went down the hallway and turned into a smaller hallway. The men got sparser in number. It seemed deserted compared to the area we'd just passed through.

We came to a leather flap and Nu-reeh stopped and stared at the five men outside of it. "Mistress," one man said bowing his head, "they will not eat and they have tried to take our lives. We cannot get near them."

Nu-reeh made a sound of disgust and said some of the fouler words Fuji had taught me. She put me down and ordered the men to open the flap.

"Go in and fix this," she ordered.

"Your one purpose is the life inside of you. Save the Life of my men to give the child what it needs." She knew, I thought shocked.

I wasn't an idiot, so I bowed my head to her and said, "Yes, Mistress,"

... in the same polite tone the guard had used.

As if to remind me what she was capable of, Nu-reeh drove the tip of the spear on heewihg (nto the wall above: bowed my head as chunks of rock rained down around me and backed into the room.

"I will not tolerate failure in this matter. Your weakness will not harm one of my species," she hissed harshly.

I stood trembling, facing the leather flap for a moment before Menge see wher, wage the a was dimly lit central fire pit. The flame was like the torches though, smokeless.

"Feed them this," the voice behind me said and I spun around.

One of the guards had come through the door and was handing me a large pot. My eyes shot\down and Cait make ahaa Gas sure I was not supposed to look or speak to this man. He muttered something, sitting it beside the fire.

"Feed it to them, they have to eat," he ordered again pointing to a bowl and spoon lying beside the pot.

Chapter 225

I had no idea who he was talking about and just stood staring at the floor. He cursed several times and grabbed my chin forcing me to look at him. The man pantomimed eating.

"Feed-them-this," he said slowly enunciating each word and pointing to the pot. "Do-you-understand?"

This was the mountains, I reasoned. Hopefully the same rules did not apply about not speaking to or looking at other men. They must not, because this man was demanding I answer him

"I understand you, sir," squeaked out and he looked relieved. The man turned on his heel and left without another word.

I turned back to the fire and stood close to it. The room was not an uncomfortable temperature, but my hands were still regaining feeling from the freezing trip here. A motion along the wall got my attention.

Outside the glow of the fire, the room was cast in darkness. A small torch lay unused by the pit. I held it close to the flaming and the thing lit up.

Carefully, I moved to where I had seen movement. Whoever was laying in a lump on the floor I was evidently supposed to feed. I crept closer and recognized the type of outfit.

It was a man, Laying on a pad on the floor. Around his neck was a thick metal collar and a very short chain attached him to the wall. His clothing was what I was used to from the compound, leather pants, leather boots, and white shirt. He didn't move as I got closer.

The man was filthy. Dirt was matted in a wound on his scalp and his shirt was sprayed with blood. His pants were a soiled mess on the front and ripped in several places. From the smell of it, the area around him was soaked with his urine.

The prisoner didn't move again, so I stepped closer. The face was bruised and bloodied. His Lip was split, but I knew him. It was Master Kein!

I dropped to my knees beside his head and called his name several times. He didn't rouse at all. My hand went instinctively to his chest. He had a heart beat and his warm breath moved past my arm.

I tugged futilely at the chain attaching him to the wall and it would not budge. "Master Kein, wake up," I whispered urgently in his ear.

I shook his shoulder lightly and he still didn't move. He Looked bad, very bad. The women had nearly killed him. I had no idea how I was supposed to fix this.

| picked up the torch and looked wildly toward the door. The two men from before were standing just inside.

“He needs help!” | called loudly.

“He needs Healers to clean his wounds and a clean mat to sleep on. Please, please help him.” “They all need the same help, slave,” the original man said. “Mistress has told us to bring you what you wish.”

The men disappeared and the weight of what they had said eyniarOThdy altneedthestimne elp’.

| raised the torch and Looked beyond Master Kein. Master Bane was chained to the wall keeile BiMabdut seven fetQWay and was just as bad. Master Damien, Master Evan, and Master Christof were also present and wounded.

The men brought me rags and buckets of water. At my requests, they dra ged inden iéah hate and ldid the side the door. | begged for blankets and those were delivered also.

Chapter 226

| struggled with the lack of light and the men pointed out torches to me. They were at the foot of each mat and rose from the floor. The men would not be able to reach them themselves. | Lit them and the room was bright as day.

“why?” | begged before the guards left again. “Why were they treated like this? Why would their Mistress do this to them?” The men looked at each other before looking at me.

“The Mistress Nu-reeh is kind to her men. She did not do this. The men did it to themselves. They attempted to kill one another to end their pain after the bond was broken. Mistress Nu-reeh found them and brought them here.”

| stood shocked and staring at the man. This was a suicide attempt. That’s why the men were chained apart, so they couldn’t hurt each other anymore.

“Fix itas Nu-reeh ordered and you will live, slave,” one of the men said. “Fail, and you die with them. We are sure of this.” The guards left and did not return. | stood still for only a moment before starting to work

The job started with Master Kein, he had looked the worst. | stripped him with a great deal of difficulty from his ruined clothes. Thanks to the chain on his neck | had to rip his ruined shirt off. He roused once and looked at me.

“Master Kein, I’m here, you're going to be okay,” | tried to comfort him.

His glassy eyes looked right past me before they slid closed again. The pad he was on reeked. | rolled him to a fresh pad and cleaned him there. Slowly and methodically | worked. My efforts removed the stench from his body and the dried blood from around his wounds. After dressing his wounds | shifted him to a new clean pad and covered him with a blanket.

| talked to Master Kein the entire time | worked. He didn’t react to anything | said, but it seemed the right thing to do. While I worked on him | tried to keep the anxiety out of my voice and speak in a calm tone.

Each man received the same treatment from me. I’d clean them on a pad and then roll them to a fresh one. It was exhausting work. By the time | was done | was covered in sweat and dirt, which | attempted to clean off myself. | was also streaked with their blood.

The men outside had said they should eat. While | worked my Masters had each opened their eyes once or twice. They were not awake enough for me to feed them. | didn’t want to fail at this mission without at least trying, though.

| opened the pot the men had brought and looked in at it. The sludge had the consistency and color of oatmeal, but it smelled appetizing. Using the spoon and bowl, | Ladled out what Looked Like a serving.

The bowl was still steaming, probably it was warm from sitting near the fire. | carried it over to Master Damien and knelt beside him. Sitting the bowl on the ground | tried to wake him.

"Master Damien, you need to eat. Wake up for a bit and let me feed you," | said softly.

He didn't rouse so | shook his m shoulder and

A hand was around my throat suddenly. If it wasn't for the me slave collar, have windpipe. Master Damien looked up at me with a wild Look in his eyes.

"Relax, Master, please," | begged not moving. " | just want you to eat something." The hand relaxed and fell limply back to the pad.

"Death is better than this," he pained voice,

Chapter 227

" | cannot do it. It is worse than before, we are completely broken." "No, Master Damien, that's not true," | said softly. "You are with your Brothers. Your bond will be repaired. Eat a few bites for me, please, Master Damien."

The expression on his face was heart breaking. | just wanted to comfort him, but | was determined to help him. | ignored his pained Look and helped prop him up, so | could feed him a few bites.

The impression | got was they had not eaten in some time, the other man had been quite insistent. For now, Master Damien didn't refuse and took the warm gruel. Soon he had finished the entire bowl. His eyes drifted shut and he settled back after he was done.

My lower back was sore and my belly ached slightly as | struggled to my feet, but | ignored it. One of them had eaten. That had to be a good thing. Hopefully, Nu-reeh would be pleased and the most | would suffer would be an aching back.

| tried to feed Master Kein next, but he just stared at me dully when | managed to wake him. In an effort to gain his attention | pulled his hand to my breast. | petted myself with his fingers until he was more alert. Still, he refused to speak or acknowledge what | wanted him to do.

In a stroke of inspiration | put a dollop of the gruel over my right nipple. It was warm and heavy and made my breast tingle. "Eat, Master Kein," | said offering him the nipple.

Master Kein watched for a moment and then sat up on his own. He Leaned forward and ate the warm mess off my flesh. Stubborn man refused to take it any other way for the remainder of the meal. Every bite he ate was deposited over a breast first and he licked or sucked it off.

The stimulation made my breasts feel heavy and full. By the time Master Kein was done something strange had started to happen. A bluish fluid was leaking from my nipples.

| rose and stretched feeling satisfied two had eaten. Using a rag | wiped away the sticky feeling and errant breast milk, but it continued to appear in little beads. It would stop when it wanted to, | supposed. No time to worry about it now as Master Kein settled back on his mat and closed his eyes. There were three others to tend to.

| refilled the bowl and caught Master Evan watching me. He was awake, so | went to him next. | knelt on his mat and sat the bowl down. Perhaps | could persuade him to sit up if he was awake, | hoped.

Before | had to time to ask Master Evan to sit up, he grabbed me. A sharp yelp escaped my lips as | was pulled down. He moved swiftly rolling onto me and hovering over me while watching the line of fluid that had been dribbling out of my body.

Master Evans tongue snaked out tasting it. He Lapped the Line of milk from the top of my stomach to my nipple. It didn't take him long to realize hard sucking produced more.

My breasts felt strange and heavy as he sucked. It was disappointing when he stopped and fondled my nipples with his hands. He tossed something away from us and then placed his mouth back over my flesh.

| Looked down and had to smile. He'd removed the nipple rings that held the other men's crest. | was elated, that must mean they were waking up.

Master Evan sucked until | was dry and tender. | was sure | wasn't producing enough milk to make a substantial meal for a full grown man, so | fed him from the bowl. He took it willingly.

Master Bane was easier to feed and so was Master Christof. Both of them sat up and allowed me to feed them without a fuss. Neither would talk, they seemed shattered somehow.

Master Bane and Master Christof each removed a piece of the

ornamentation the on. me. Respite thei efforts at removal, | still wore my earrings and the cuffs on my ankles. The dirty green slip of fabric at my waist was there also.

They were all resting on clean mats under the blankets. Each of them had eaten a serving of food. When Nu-reeh returned | prayed she would find the current situation sufficiently better than it had been.

My own stomach rumbled and | Looked into the pot. A small amount of the gruel still clung to the sides. | scraped it out and ate that bit myself.

| petted my bulging stomach and hoped it was enough to satisfy the little Life inside of y food, so hopefully the small amount | had taken would be enough. | was already upset with myself for losing my mind and not eating for several days prior.

Resting with my back to the fire pit, | looked around the room we were in. It was circular and had a si gig or. The mats I'd piled beside that entrance were gone now. The guards must have done that. Replacing the pile were several moderately sized containers that looked like gourds.

Chapter 228

| walked over to inspect the new objects and heard Master Damien behind me. "Bring me one," he said quietly.

| picked one up and took it to Master Damien. He pushed his blanket back to expose his genitals and pressed his penis into the opening of the gourd. | watched fascinated as he relieved himself in the container.

It was a urinal. I'd seen similar things on Earth when my uncle was in the hospital. Master Damien relieved himself and sat the gourd beside him on the ground. I picked it up and took it back over by the door.

ALL the men wanted to use one. I was thrilled they weren't peeing on themselves and happily brought the gourds over to them. I wondered what we would do when they needed to use the facilities the other way. That would be much more difficult than delivering a urinal, I feared.

A thought hit me and I gasped. My plug was still inside of me. I couldn't wear it all the time and there was no one to take care of me.

While I'd become reacquainted with feeding myself and wiping myself, I'd never touched the plug. It was stupid but that just

seemed like something I shouldn't do. Perhaps I should ask, I thought, but who? "Ciara," Master Damien called, "come rest with

me. "Yes, Master Damien," I answered walking up beside him.

Before I could kneel down, he removed the cuffs from my ankles and tossed them toward the door. "Kneel," he commanded and I obeyed.

Master Damien removed the chain from my waist and threw it into the fire. My green and gold earrings were also removed and tossed away. A hand snaked between my legs and the plug was gently pulled from me.

I sighed with relief.

Master Damien petted the mark on my rounded belly for a moment. He didn't seem to have the energy to really worry about it, though. He yawned and settled on his side gesturing me to lay in front of him.

The mat we were on was narrow, but it wasn't an unpleasant place to sleep. The padding was thicker than it looked and the room was warm. I drifted to sleep with Master Damien's hand cupping my swollen stomach.

I awoke a while later. Master Bane was restless. Moving over to him I stroked his short beard and down his chest to soothe him. "Thirsty," he said.

There was a new jug by the door. I got it and helped Master Bane to drink. Everyone else also woke up and took a chug of water. Once I was done, Master Bane held his blankets back and invited me onto his pallet silently.

Under the blankets next to Master Bane I curled around his side and stroked his chest. He had what appeared to be several stab wounds to the upper stomach. I had wrapped and dressed them before. I avoided touching them as I lay with him. He calmed as I stroked him.

There was no day or night in the room we were in. The torches still lit the room, but I imagined it was night. I slept with each man for a short while until someone else seemed distressed.

Lastly, I ended up in Master Christof's bed. I had the strangest dream as I lay there.

It was pitch dark in my dream and I could hear the men crying out in pain and anger. I stood in the easpat Keros lantern in the middle of the darkness. My first impulse was to take the light and go find them. When I tried to pick it up it would not budge. The message was clear, they had to come here.

I didn't like the dark particularly. Things moved and shuffled all around me as I walked away from the light. The ground slithered under my feet and the air seemed to grab at me as I walked through it.

Somehow I managed to find the men and coaxed them one by one to sit with me in the golden gipwcinny' dream, Nvas powerful and strong. I picked Master Damien up and carried him with me to the light. He kept trying to leave its safe confines.

"No," I told him as he tried to move away, "we stay together. It's safer that way."

Chapter 229

The dark was frightening, being alone in it was terrifying. | needed them close to me. "I can't," he told me.

"| can't do it again. It's too hard. We cannot live like this, let us die."

"No, we stay together," | said pushing him to sit in the Lamplight.

"They won't let us stay together," he said drifting away into the dark.

"They will take you away again. We cannot survive and you did not come."

My arms became huge in the dream. | hugged them together and pulled them all to my chest. They couldn't escape back into the blackness. | would make them stay in the Light with me.

The crushing despair I'd escaped only a few days before started to creep back in. They had wanted to be together with me so badly and | had not come. They had waited and then they had decided to get me themselves.

The men had tried to get back to my compound to check on me, but Nu-reeh had stopped them. She'd taken their transport and scolded them.

"You have permission to be here only," she'd growled at Damien. "| will bring your transport back when your free days are over. You cannot go to the compound."

The men were left at the cabin to deal with their desperation. Panic and hopelessness set in. They were sure something had happened to me. Their family was ripped and torn, never to be whole again. The anger had taken hold of them.

Eventually they would find the men that did not bring me and hurt them, but it would take a long time. They were too weak to hold their family together. | could be gone for many turns of the moon before they could know. It had to end if we could not truly be one being.

| woke from the dream sweating and shaking. Master Christof was shivering behind me and | turned to face him. He looked desperate and yet somehow relieved.

| knew when | looked at Master Christof he had had the same dream. We all had. The weight of their misery hung around me and | felt it.

We were bonded, the six of us. | understood the anticipation suddenly, whispered memories told me how they had waited for me at the cabin. We had four days again, but | never came and they couldn't come to me. They were so upset, the last vestige of good they had coveted for themselves was gone. In the end they just felt pain, so they inflicted it on one another.

Nu-reeh found them finally like that when she came to get them and brought them here. She tried to help them, but there was nothing she could do. They whispered my name to her. That's why she went to get me.

"It cannot happen," Master Christof said, "you are not like us. You are not of this world."

He was right. | wasn't like them. No part of me could f ahatsttarng'a bong, with @ndther.

It was why I got better when the bond broke. | didn't need such a thing to be happy. I could survive alone.

My mind felt like it did all those days when the funny thoughts flitted through my head. Iw made '!

C strongeNhéw and more constant. The chain and collar irritated them. The clean mats were nice and what had | done with their boots?

My belly twitched and rolled. The little life inside me was awake a d, hand had béeh'on the side of my stomach and he felt the movement.

His purple eyes got wider and he pushed me to Lay on my back. The blanket covering us was moved so he could examine me. All attention focused on Master Christof, who was focusing on my rotund belly.

“Why is this bigger? What have the others done to you?” he asked. “Is this illness the reason they did not bring you to us at the cabin?”

Probably, | thought. The men that kept me probably didn’t want my real owners to see my stomach. The collective in my head roared at what they thought must be a sign of sickness.

| lay still and watched Master Christof’s eyes. This was not how | planned to tell them. | felt they would be angry when they found out, so perhaps chained to a wall was better.

“One of you put a baby inside of me,” | told him simply, although speaking the words seemed unnecessary. “There is no word | know to call it in your Language. In my world the word is pregnant.” Nu-reeh entered then and the men all sat up.

“There is a word in our language also, slave. The men do not have need to use it, so they do not know it. | will permit them to use your word,” she told me simply.

| recognized the two other women that followed her in. The one to her right had been leaking venom when they took me from the compound, her name was Dinah, | knew now. As she stared at me the amber Liquid seeped from her fangs again. The men gasped watching it hit the floor.

“Dinah,” Nu-reeh said harshly turning to her, “out, if you cannot control yourself.”

“We take precautions,” she said.

“It should not happen. Make them tell you why they did not follow the rules.”

She turned and strode back outside. | heard the clatter of her talons as she walked across the floor. Master Damien spoke then, “Nu-reeh, we have angered your sister, Dinah, and we are very sorry.” Nu-reeh ignored him and got back to the point.

"The slave is going to have a child, Damien," Nu-reeh said.

"We know you left it with Rue and his Brothers. We wish to know who stopped giving the slave the health tonic."

"Slaves cannot bear us children," Master Damien said

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"The slaves are not female, Mistress." The men murmured agreement and Nu-reeh growled.

"You buy female slaves. They are built for your pleasure. Human slaves are Like us in

T, 8 the auction to prevent this and you give a tonic every day to prevent it. Who stopped giving the slave the tonic? Answer me now."

"We paid for the tonic, Mistress," Master Damien Dinah back in the room.

"When the slave was with us we gave the tonic to it ourselves."